

economic development, welfare-to-work initiatives, and environmental cleanup in our great Nation.

EXPRESSING THE CONDOLENCES
OF THE HOUSE IN THE DEATH
OF DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES

SPEECH OF

HON. PATSY T. MINK

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 4, 1997

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, the outpouring of emotion following the tragic death of Princess Diana is extraordinary. We were stunned at the news of her death and as the hours and days passed we realized that it was more than the loss of a famous person; it was a phenomenal feeling of personal loss that stretched across the whole world.

Here was a woman of noble birth who in a fairy tale episode became royalty and then the mother of the next King of England. People watched and were awed by her spectacular beauty and grace as she entered this rigid and seemingly immutable world. We worried that she would be smothered like the others by the ritual and the rigidity of the palace rules. Or

worse, that she would lose her individuality and be stripped of her independence and humanity. Instead she demonstrated a resilience to stand her ground and unflinchingly express words of understanding about the awful pain, suffering and despair so prevalent in the world at large. From her own hurt and from her giving we all learned the power of love.

Despite her own personal problems, including her failed marriage and the public abuse that she had to endure, she was able to maintain a strong loving relationship with her two sons. She exemplified this devotion to her children by trying to assure that her two sons had an understanding about the reality of life among ordinary people. She took them with her as often as she could. She tried to translate into their life experiences her own deep abiding belief that people have a responsibility to love and care for those who are ill and who are in need of help.

She ultimately lost any formal power, authority or office from which to plead the causes which she cared so deeply about. But she was not deterred. Most people would have become distraught at the loss of station and position. But not Princess Diana. I believe that it is this undaunted spirit that people admire most. Each of us wish that we could be as strong and as determined to follow our will.

In adversity Princess Diana gained in strength and personal determination.

In our world of politics, public people who stand up for the unfortunate, the homeless, the poor, and the hungry are offered derision rather than praise. Women who stand up for themselves and give care to others win suspicion rather than admiration.

My heart is filled with admiration for what Princess Diana did to mobilize public opinion in support of human causes like poverty, AIDS, Hansen's disease, cancer, homelessness, and for her fight to seek an international treaty against land mines. My heart is filled with pride that this woman earned respect and affection on a scale unparalleled in our lifetime and in this century.

I hold Princess Diana in the highest personal esteem for the glory that she brought to those in our world who care for people in despair. She celebrated their efforts and gave encouragement to their commitment. Her words were directed to governments to do more, to care more and to work harder to find ways to end this misery. She venerated those who love the poor and the sick and made their work a matter of honor.

The brief life of Princess Diana teaches us that the importance of life is what we are able to do for others.